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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord, as we look at our history, we marvel at Your mercies. You have blessed our Nation with Your presence, repeatedly opening doors for new opportunities. You have delivered us from perils, setbacks, and dangers. Great is Your faithfulness.

Guide our lawmakers according to Your will. Give them humble hearts, emptied of presumptuous pride and motivated by a desire to please You. Make their spirits quarries out of which stones for new citadels of freedom and excellence may be fashioned. Reveal to them the means You would have them use to establish justice and peace. Lord, make this Nation the hope of all who suffer and the dread of all who would enslave the human spirit.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK L. PRYOR led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 22, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. PRYOR thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, there will be a period of morning business for 1 hour. Senators will be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The majority will control the first 30 minutes, and the Republicans will control the final 30 minutes.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2647, the Department of Defense authorization bill. There will then be an hour for debate equally divided and controlled between Senators LEVIN and MCCAIN, the chairman and ranking member of that committee. Around 11:45 a.m., give or take a few minutes, the Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the conference report.

Last night, I filed cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3548, the Unemployment Compensation Extension Act. That is so important to millions of people in America today. We have a lot of people out of work, and their unemployment benefits have run out. I hope we do not have to have a cloture

vote in the morning. I would think it would be to everyone's interest to move forward on this legislation. I would like to do it, just get rid of the bill, finish that.

I have had conversations with my Republican colleagues, and they want some amendments. We have been pretty good this year being very open in the amendment process. There have been a couple snags once in a while that we ran into but not often. I see no reason why we cannot have a reasonable number of amendments on each side and complete the legislation today. If we do not, we are going to have to have that cloture vote tomorrow. If we have a cloture vote tomorrow, we likely will have a vote on other matters which I have the right to bring forward without notice—at least another matter. I hope that is not necessary. I know staff has been working to come up with a finite list of amendments. I hope that can be done very quickly.

People have the right to know what the schedule is, and I have done my best to outline what the schedule is going to be in the next 24 hours. I hope we can move toward some finality in that regard.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I also remind everyone that we are in the process of coming up with a bill we will send from the Senate to the Congressional Budget Office. It is so important that we move forward on this legislation. Health care is vitally important to this country.

Every Thursday when we are in session, Senator ENSIGN and I have a Welcome to Washington Breakfast, and it is very good. We have been doing this for 9 years. Today we had the Principal of the Year, from Frank Lamping Elementary School, grades 1 through 5. Principal of the Year—that is really significant. We have well more than

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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